

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

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SAM-01 PM-03 DODE-00 OMB-01 AID-10 IGA-01 MC-02 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3897 IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SANAA 1260

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YE, YS, SA, IZ

SUBJ: MEETING WITH COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN HAMDI

REF: STATE 129410

KUWAIT PASS DOHA, MUSCAT

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

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1. SUMMARY: IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR EVENING

JUNE 20 CALLED AT COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REQUEST, COL. HAMDI EXPRESSED APPRECIATION OF USG DETERMINATION THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO BREAK IN RELATIONS AS RESULT JUNE 13 MILITARY TAKE OVER; SAID HE SOUGHT EVEN CLOSER RELATIONS WITH US; PROMISED RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WITHIN 4-6 MONTHS WITH NEW ELECTIONS TO CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY AT THAT TIME; STATED THAT DURING PRESENT TRANSITIONAL PERIOD HE WOULD RETAIN TIGHT PERSONAL CONTROL TO ENSURE CONTINUITY OF INTERNAL FREEDOMS AND DEVELOPMENT AND UNCHANGED FOREIGN POLICY INCLUDING CLOSEST TIES WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND FIRM OPPOSITION TO SUBVERSION FROM PDRY, IRAQ AND OTHERS; SAID HE WAS SENDING MISSION TO SAUDI ARABIA TO EXPLAIN HIS POLICIES AND SEEK ALLEVIATE FEARS SAG MIGHT HAVE REGARDING AL-AYNI'S DESIGNATION AS INTERIM PRIMIN; REQUESTED INFORMAL SUPPORT US IN SEEKING SAUDI COMPREHENSION; INQUIRED RE STATUS OF US ARMS SALE FINANCED BY ABU BHABI; URGED USG MOVE QUICKLY ON BROADER QUESTION OF RETRAINING AND RE-EQUIPPING YEMENI FORCES. END SUMMARY.

2. COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN COL. IBRAHIM AL-HAMDI REQUESTED THAT I MEET WITH HIM AT MILITARY HEADQUARTERS EVENING JUNE 20. MEETING ATTENDED BY CO. YAHYA MUTAWAKKIL, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO CAIRO AND NOW CC MEMBER, WHO OBVIOUSLY HAMDI'S CLOSEST AND MOST TRUSTED SUPPORTER, AND DCM NEWTON. HAMDI RECEIVED US VERY WARMLY. HE APPEARED SURPRISINGLY FRESH AND FIT FOR MAN WHO HAD BEEN WORKING AROUND THE CLOCK AND SLEEPING ON A MATTESS NEXT TO HIS DESK.

3. HAMDI EXPLAINED AGAIN THAT CC HAD NOT CARRIED OUT A COUP D'ETAT. WITH SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED COLLAPSE OF CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING RESIGNATION OF BOTH EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP, MILITARY HAD FELT IMPELLED TO STEP IN TO PREVENT CHAOS. CC HOWEVER, HAD NO INTENTION OF INDEFINITELY RETAINING POWER; ITS RULE WOULD BE TRANSITIONAL TO NEW CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP.

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4. HAMDI SAID HE COUNTING HEAVILY ON FRIENDSHIP OF USG AND INTENDED THAT YAR-US RELATIONS BE BROUGHT EVEN CLOSER DURING PERIOD OF HIS TRANSITIONAL CONTROL.

5. IN ACCORDANCE REFTEL I INFORMED HAMDI THAT IN USG'S VIEW THERE HAD BEEN NO INTERRUPTION OR ANY EFFECT ON OUR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. WE GRATIFIED BY HAMDI'S STATEMENTS THAT HE WOULD QUICKLY RETURN COUNTRY

TO CIVILIAN, CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. OUR POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP FOR YAR CONTINUED. WE WOULD TRY TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE DURING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. IN THAT REGARD, ALTHOUGH WE HAD NO DESIRE ARGUE FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL, I SUGGESTED THAT KEY DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS IN YAR BE CONTINUED IN OFFICE IN ORDER TO FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT EFFORT AND INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

6. HAMDI SAID MANDATE OF NEW AYNi GOVERNMENT WOULD BE TO PREPARE COUNTRY FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. IT WOULD DECIDE SUCH QUESTIONS AS FUTURE FORM OF REPUBLICAN COUNCIL AND DATE FOR CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. WHEN THIS PREPARATORY PERIOD FINISHED, AYNi CABINET WOULD STEP DOWN. HAMDI SAID TIMETABLE FOR THIS IS 4-6 MONTHS, PROVIDED COUNTRY IS STABLE ENOUGH TO AVOID HARMFUL REACTION IF MILITARY RELINQUISHED CONTROL. AYNi HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN TO BROADEN SUPPORT AND REDUCE CONFRONTATION IN PRESENT SENSITIVE CIRCUMSTANCES. TRANSITION CABINET EXPECTED TO BE FORMED SHORTLY AND WOULD PROBABLY INCLUDE MANY MINISTERS FROM OLD, INCLUDING PERHAPS FORMER PRiMIN MAKKI. CC, HOWEVER, WAS IN FULL CONTROL AND WOULD NOT ALLOW ACTIVITY BY EXTREMISTS OR AGITATORS. COMMENT: HAMDI'S MESSAGE WAS CLEAR: AL-AYNi'S DESIGNATIONS AS PRiMIN CHARGED WITH FORMING INTERIM CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT NEED NOT CAUSE APPREHENSION SINCE HAMDI HIMSELF INTENDS RETAIN FULL CONTROL OVER POLICY AND DETAILS OF ADMINISTRATION DURING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF CC RULE. END COMMENT.

7. IN FOREIGN POLICY HAMDI SAID YAR'S TWO DANGEROUS ENEMIES WERE PDRY AND IRAQ. CC PLACED HIGHEST VALUE ON ITS FRIENDSHIP WITH SAUDI ARABIA. IT WAS GRATEFUL FOR SAG'S INITIAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT
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BUT IN LAST TWO DAYS IT HAD SEEN EVIDENCE OF SAG MISGIVINGS. THIS COULD BE TROUBLESOME IF SAG DECIDED USE RIGHTISTS AGAINST CC. NOTING US CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BOTH SAG AND YAR, HAMDI HOPED WE WOULD USE OUR GOOD OFFICES TO HELP AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS. CC ITSELF WOULD SEND A DELEGATION SHORTLY TO CLARIFY ITS POLICIES TO SAG LEADERSHIP. COMPARABLE DELEGATIONS WOULD VISIT PRESIDENTS SADAT AND ASAD.

8. I COMMENTED THAT EARLY DISPATCH OF DELEGATION TO SAG IMPORTANT. WE AWARE SAG HAD FULL CONFIDENCE IN HAMDI BUT SPEAKING FRANKLY THIS WAS NOT THE CASE WITH AYNi. WE HAD REPORTED FULLY ON CC EFFORTS RESTORE STABILITY AND IN COURSE OUR CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH SAG HAVE DISCUSSED YEMEN DEVELOPMENTS WITH IT. WE WOULD

CONTINUE AS APPROPRIATE TO TRY TO PLAY HELFUL ROLE
SUPPLEMENTING YARG'S OWN EFFORTS.

9. HAMDI INQUIRED ABOUT STATUS OF YEMEN'S SALES
CASES UAA AND UAB NEGOTIATED WITH FORMER CHIEF OF
STAFF COL. MASWARI AND DISCUSSED IN ABUD DHABI WITH
SHAIK ZAYID BY EX-PRIMIN MAKKI. I CONFIRMED THAT
MASWARI HAD SIGNED PAPERS AND SHAIKH ZAYID HAD PROMISED
TO REMIT MONEY THROUGH BANK TO USG. WE HAD NOT YET
HEARD THAT CHEQUE ACTUALLY SENT BUT WOULD SEEK INFORMA-
TION. FOR ABU DHABI: APPRECIATE YOUR CONFIRMING
TRANSMISSION OF FUNDS BY ADG. DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT WAS
JUNE 10.

10. HAMDI URGED THAT ON BRAODER QUESTION OF RETRAIN-
ING AND RE-EQUIPPING YAR MILITARY FORCES, SO LONG IN ABEY-
ANCE, US MOVE QUICKLY IN CONCERT WITH FRIENDS.

11. COMMENT: HAMDI SEEMED CONFIDENT AND VERY MUCH
IN CONTROL. HIS APPOINTMENT OF AYNi DESIGNED MUTE
LEFTIST OPPOSITION BUT HE BELIEVES HE CAN CONTROL
CIVILIAN CABINET. NAMING OF IRAQ AND PDRY AS YEMEN'S
ENEMIES MAKE CLEAR HE WILL NOT TOLERATE LEFTIST SUBVER-
SION NO MATTER WHO HEADS CABINET.

12. HAMDI APPEARS SINCERE IN HIS
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ASSURANCES OF INTENTION RETURN GOVERNMENT TO CIVILIAN
RULE. HE UNDOUBTEDLY REALIZES THAT IN THE LONG RUN
ANY OTHER COURSE WOULD BE REPUGNANT TO YEMENI PEOPLE
SO LONG OPPRESSED BY AUTOCRATIC IMAMATE AND SO ATTACHED
TO FREEDOMS WON THROUGH PROTRACTED CIVIL WAR AND FOUNDATION
OF REPUBLIC. HAMDI IS SENSITIVE, WELL EDUCATED AND
INTELLIGENT. THERE IS NO FLAVOR OF A QADHAFI IN HIM.
AND YET, THE EXERCISE OF POWER, EVEN WITH HIS
PRESENT DETERMINATION LIMIT THE ARMY'S ROLE, MIGHT
BECOME A HABIT HERE AS IN SO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES.
PROPERLY, I THINK, US INFLUENCE HAS AND WILL CON-
TINUE TO BE USED TO PREVENT THIS.
CRAWFORD

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